PISO'S CONSPIRACY,

A Tragedy

Acted at the DUKE's *THEATRE.*

LONDON,

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PROLOGUE.

IN Plays, *it has been a long Practis'd Cheat,*
To make large Bills of Fare, t'a ſlender Treat.
So have You ſeen, a Huge Large Sheet appear
In Praiſe o'th' Beauty of Miſs-Non-ſo-Fair:
But We more Modeſtly intend t' abuſe You;
Wee'l tell You before-hand how ill Wee'l uſe You.
Expect to ſee a Wond'rous Sight, as rare
As Indian-Elephant, *or* Norwich-Bear.
Expect grave Strut, big Looks, and thund'ring Speeches,
From Hero, *made up by the Force of Breeches.*
Aye, and a good Shift too: For, under the Roſe,
Whil'ſt we look big by Vertue of Our Cloaths,
And, Hero *like, talk what We cannot do,*
We're much ſuch Bluſterers as ſome of You.
Beſides Our Men Players are out of Heart
Of being ſeen in an Heroick *Part:*
What, with Prince Nick, *and t'other Houſe-Gallants,*
They have run Hero's *out of Countenance?*
We for Heroick's *then. 'Tis Our laſt Plot;*
And Gentlemen, like Us, or like Us not;
All's one; For Gallants, We have tryed all Arts,
From a Sir Martin, *to a Man of Parts,*
And all won't do; therefore We are ſo hardn'd
By the Critiques *Rage, that paſt all hopes of Pardon.*
Do well or ill, We are reſolved to teaſe You,
And 'tis high time when all Our Tricks can't pleaſe You.

Actors Names.

Nero, Emperour of *Rome*.

Nimphidius, A Noble Man of *Rome*, and Favourite to *Poppea*.

Tigellinus, *Nero's* Creditour.

Neophilus, *Epophiriditus*, *Petronius*. Courtiers.

Antonius, in Love with *Poppea*.

Flavius, A Commander in the Army.

Piso, *Seneca*, *Lucan*, *Scevinus*, Senators, and Noble Men of *Rome*.

Memicus, *Scevinus's* Free-Man.

Three *Romans*.

Poppea, The Empresse.

Pages, Guards, *and* Attendants.

SCENE *ROME*.

Piſo's CONSPIRACY.

ACTUS PRIMUS.

Enter *Petronius*, and *Antonius*.

Petronius.

TAke the Wench
I ſhew'd thee now, or elſe go ſeek ſome other.
What, can your Choller no way be allay'd,
But with Imperial Titles?

Anto. Great are thy Fortunes *Nero*, great thy Power:
Thy Empire Limited with Natures bounds;
Upon thy Ground the Sun doth Set, and Riſe:
The Day, and Night are thine:
Nor can the Planets wander where they will:
See that Proud Earth, that fears not *Cæſars* Name;

Yet nothing of all this I envy thee;
But her to whom the World unforc't Obeys;
Whoſe Eye's more Worth, than all it looks upon,
That are through the Wide Earth, or Heaven diſpos'd.

Pet. Indeed, ſhe ſteals and robs each part oth' World,
With borrow'd Beauties, to enflame the Eye;
The Sea, to fetch her Pearl, is div'd into;
The Diamond Rocks are cut to make her ſhine:
To Plume her Pride, the Birds do naked ſing,
When my *Euanthe*, in a Homely Gown.——

Ant. Homely, I Faith.

Pet. I, Homely, in her Gown;
But look upon her Face, and that's ſet out
With no ſmall Grace, no vailed Shadow's there.

Enter Poppea, *Royally Attended, who Paſſes over the Stage in State.*

Ant. Great Queen, whom Nature made to be her Glory,
Fortune got Eyes, and came to be thy Servant.
Honour is Proud to be thy Title; though
Thy Beauties do draw up my Soul; Yet ſtill,
So Bright, ſo Glorious is thy Majeſty,
That it beats down again my Climbing Thoughts.

Pet. That's true;
But give me a Wench, that will be eaſily had,
Not Woed with Coſt; And being ſent for, comes:
And when I have her folded in my Arms,
Then *Cleopatra* ſhe, or *Lucrece*:
Ile give her any Title.

Ant. Yet not ſo much her Greatneſs and Eſtate
My Hopes diſhearten, as her Chaſtity.

Pet. Chaſtity! Fool, a word not known in Courts:
Well may it lodge in Mean, and Country Homes,
Where Poverty, ſhort Sleep, and Labour keeps 'em down,
But never comes to Great Men's Palaces,
Where Eaſe, and Riches, ſtirring Thoughts beget;
Provoking Meats, and Surfeit VVines, inflame:

VVhere

Where all their ſetting forth's, but to be Woed;
And Woed they would not be, but to be won.
Will one Man ſerve *Poppea?* Nay, thou ſhalt
Make her as ſoon Contented with an Eye.

Enter Nimphidius.

Nim. Whilſt *Nero*, in the Streets his Pageants ſhews,
I am ſent for to his Fair Wife's Chamber:
You Gracious Stars that ſmil'd upon my Birth;
And thou Bright Star, more Powerful than them all,
Whoſe Favouring Smiles have made me what I am,
Thou ſhalt my God, my Fate, and Fortune be. [*Exit* Nim.

Ant. How Sawcily yon Fellow
Enters the Empreſſe Chamber!

Pet. I, and her too. *Antonius*, knoweſt thou him?

Ant. What! know the only Favorite of the Court!
Indeed, not many dayes ago, thou mighteſt
Have not unlawfully Ask'd that Queſtion.

Pet. Why? Is he Rais'd?

Ant. That I have ſought in him;
But never Piece of Good Deſert could find:
He is *Nimphidia*'s Son, the Free'd Woman,
Which baſeneſs to ſhake off he nothing has,
But his own Pride.

Pet. You remember, when *Gallus*, *Celſus*,
And others too, though now forgotten, were
Great in *Poppea*'s Eyes.

Ant. I do, and did interpret it in them
An Honourable Favour ſhe bore to Vertue,
Or Parts like Vertue.

Pet. Faith,
'Tis my Opinion then the Fault was their's,
That their better Qualities were ne'r underſtood:
I once was great in wavering Smiles of Court;
I fell, becauſe I knew: ſince I have given
My time to my own Pleaſures, and would now
Adviſe thee too to mean and ſafe Delight's.

The Skin's as ſoft which the Sheep's Back covers,
As that with Crimſon, and with Gold Adorn'd:
Yet 'cauſe I ſee, that thy Reſtrain'd Deſires,
Cannot their own Way chuſe; along with me,
And by my Preſident, Converted be. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Three Romans.

3. *Rom.* Whither go You? all's done I'th'Capitol;
And *Nero*, having there his Tables hung,
And Garlands up, is to the Palace gon.
'Twas beyond Wonder! I ſhall never ſee,
Nay, I never Look to ſee the like again;
Eighteen Hund'red and Eight Crowns,
For ſeveral Victories, and the Place ſet down,
Where, and in What, and Whom he Over came.

2 *Ro.* That was ſet down I'th' Tables, that were born
Upon the Souldiers Spear's.

1 *Ro.* The *Romans* were once uſed for other Ends.
But did he Win them all with Singing?

3 *Ro.* Faith, all with Singing, and with Stage-Playing.

1 *Ro.* So many Crowns got with a Song!

3 *Ro.* Had you been there, you had ſeen the *Greek* Muſicians,
Behind the Chariot, Hanging down their Heads;
Sham'd, and o're-come in their Profeſſions:
O! *Rome* was never Honour'd ſo before!

2 *Ro.* But what was he that Rode I'th'Chariot with him?

3 *Ro.* That was *Diodorus* the Minſtrel, that he favours.

1 *Ro.* Was there ever ſuch a Prince?

2. *Ro.* O *Nero Auguſtus*, the true *Auguſtus*!

3. *Ro.* Nay, had you ſeen him as he Rode along,
With an *Olympick* Crown upon his Head,
And with a *Pythian* on his Arm; You would have thought,
Looking on one, he had *Apollo* ſeem'd:
On th'other, *Hercules*.

1 *Ro.* I have heard my Father oft repeat the Triumphs,
Which in *Auguſtus Cæſar*'s times were ſhown
Upon his Victory o're the *Illirians*;

But

But it ſeems it was not like to this.

3 *Ro.* Puſh, it could nor be like this.

2 *Ro.* O *Nero Apollo*, *Nero Hercules*! [*Exeunt, the 2. and 3.* Rom.

1 *Ro.* Whether *Auguſtus* Triumph Greater was
I cannot tell; his Triumph's Cauſe I know
Was Greater far, and far more Honourable.
What are we People, or our Flattering Voices,
That always Shame and Fooliſh things Applau'd,
Having no Spark of Soul? all Ears and Eyes,
Pleas'd with Vain Showes, Deluded by our Senſes. [*Exit*

SCENE. the Second.

Enter Nero, Poppea, Nimphidius, Tigellinus, Epaproditus, Neophylus, *and Guards and Attendants.*

Ner. Now Fair *Poppea*, ſee thy *Nero* ſhine
In Bright *Achaias* Spoyls, and *Rome* in him.
The Capitol hath other Trophies ſeen,
Than it was wont; not Spoyls with Blood bedew'd,
Or the Unhappy Obſequies of Death.

Tig. And in this Strife, the Glory's all your own;
Your Tribunes cannot ſhare this Praiſe with you;
Here your Centurions have no part at all.
Bootleſs your Armies, and your Eagles were:
No Navies helpt to bring away this Conqueſt.

Nim. Even Fortunes ſelf, Fortune the Queen of Kingdoms
(That Wars Grim Valour graceth with her Deeds)
Will claim no Portion in this Victory.

Ner. Not *Bacchus* drawn from *Niſa* down with Tygers
So ſtrook the amaz'd *Indian*'s with wonder,
As *Nero*'s Glories did the *Greekiſh* Towns
Elis and *Piſa*, and the Rich *Micæna*,
Argos, and *Corinth*, Proud of her too Sea's;
All which o're come, did yield to me their Praiſe,
And Priſes of their Games.

Pop.

Pop. Yet, in your *Greekiſh* Journey, we do hear
Sparta, and *Athens*, the two Eyes of *Greece*,
Neither beheld your Perſon, nor your Skill:
Whether, becauſe they did afford no Games,
Or for their too much Gravity.

Ner. Why? what,
Should I have ſeen in them? but in the One
Hunger and Poverty?
And what in the other, but Old Fools, Long Beards;
Much Wrangling in things Needleſs to be known:
Wiſdom in Words, and only Auſtere faces?
Nero was there, where he might Honour Winn.
And Honour he has Won, and brought from *Greece*
Thoſe Spoyls, which never *Roman* could obtain:
Spoyls won by Wit, and Trophys of his Skill.

Nim. What a thing he makes it to be a Minſtril —— [*aſide*

Pop. I praiſe your Wit, my Lord, that Choſe ſuch ſafe
Honours, ſafe Spoyls, won without Duſt or Blood.

Ner. What, do you Mock us *Poppea*?

Pop. No, my good Lord, I ſpeak in earneſt,
I hate that hardy, and Adventurous Crew,
That go to Loſe their own, to Purchaſe but
The Breath of others, and the Common Voyce;
Them that will Loſe their hearing for a Sound;
That by Death only ſeek to get a Living,
Make Skarrs their Beauty, and count Loſs of Limbs
The Commendation of a proper man;
And ſo go Halting to Immortality:
Such Fools I Love worſe than they do their Lives.

Ner. But now, *Poppea*, having lay'd apart
Our boaſted Spoyls, and Ornaments of Triumph,
Come we like *Jove* to Court thee.
But thou (then wrangling *Juno*) far more fair,
Staining the Evening Beauty of the Sky,
Or the Days Brightneſs; ſhalt make glad thy *Caſar*,
Shalt make him Proud ſuch Beauties to enjoy. } *But* Nimph.
} *Exeunt all.*

Nim. Such Beauties to injoy were Happineſs,

And

And a Reward ſufficient in it ſelf,
Although no other End, or Hopes were aim'd at:
But I have other; 'Tis not *Poppea*'s Arms,
Nor the ſhort Pleaſures of a Wanton Bed,
That can Extinguiſh my Aſpiring Thirſt
To *Nero*'s Crown; by her Love I muſt Climb;
Her Bed is but a ſtep unto his Throne.
Already, Wiſe men Laugh at him, and Hate him;
The People, though his Muſick Pleaſes 'em,
They fear his Cruelty, Hate his Exactions,
Which his Need, ſtill, muſt force him to Encreaſe:
The Multitude, which cannot one thing long
Like, or Diſlike, being cloy'd with Vanity,
Will Hate their own Delights: though VViſdom do not,
Even VVearineſs, at Length, will give them Eyes.
Thus I, by *Nero*'s and *Poppea*'s Favour
Rais'd to the Envious Height of Second Place,
May gain the Firſt: Hate muſt ſtrike *Nero* down.
Love make *Nimphidius* Way unto a Crown. [*Exit.*

SCENE the Third.

Enter Seneca, Scevinus, *and* Lucan.

Sen. His Firſt beginning was his Father's Death,
His Brother's Poyſoning; and his VVife's Bloody End
Came next; his Mother's Murder clos'd up all:
Yet hitherto he was but VVicked, when
The Guilt of Greater Evils took away the Shame
Of Leſſer, and did Head-long thruſt him forth
To be the Scorne, and Laughter to the VVorld:
Then firſt an Emperour came upon the Stage,
And Sung to pleaſe the Mean and Senſleſs Rabble;
And Learn't to Act, to Dance, to be a Fencer.
And in Deſpight o'th' Majeſty of Princes,
He fell to Wreſtling, and was ſoyl'd with Duſt,
And tumbled on the Earth with Servile Hands.

Sen.

Sen. He ſometimes was trayn'd up in better Studies,
And had a Child-Hood promis'd other hopes;
High Fortunes, like Strong VVinds, do try their Veſſels.
VVas not the Race, and Theatre big enough
To have inclos'd thy Follies here at Home?
O! Could not *Rome*, and *Italy* contain
Thy Shame, But thou muſt Croſs the Sea's to ſhew it?

Sce. And make them, that had wont to ſee our Conſuls
With Conqu'ring Eagles waving in the Field,
Inſtead of that, behold an Emperour Dancing,
Playing on the Stage; and what elſe but to Name
VVere Infamy.

Luc. O *Mummius*, O *Flaminius*;
You, whom your Vertues have not made more Famous,
Than *Nero*'s Vices; You went to *Greece*,
But to other Wars, and brought Home other Conqueſts.
You, *Corinth* and *Micæna* overthrew;
And *Perſeus* ſelf, the Great *Achilles* Race
O'e-came; having *Minervas* ſtain'd Temples,
And your Slain Anceſtor's of *Troy* Reveng'd.

Sen. They ſtrove with Kings, and kind-like Adverſaries,
Were even in their Enemies made happy.
The *Macedonian* Courage tryed of Old,
And the New Greatneſs of the *Syrian* Power:
But he for *Philip* and *Antiochus*
Hath found more Eaſy Enemies to deal with,
Turpuus, *Pammenes*, and a Rout of Fidlers.

Sce. Why all the begging Minſtrills by the way
He took along with him, and forc'd to Play,
That he might over come; Imagining
Himſelf Immortal by ſuch Victories.

Luc. The Men he carryed over were enough
T'have put the *Parthian* to his Second Flight:
Or the Proud *Indian* taught the *Roman* Yoke.

Sce. But they were *Nero*'s Men, like *Nero* Arm'd
With Lutes, and Harps, and Pipes, and Fiddle-Caſes;
Souldiers to th' Shadow train'd, and not the Field.

Sen. Therefore they brought home Spoyls fit for ſuch Soldiers.

Luc.

Luc. But to throw down the Walls and Gates of *Rome*,
To make an Entrance for an Hobby-Horſe;
To vaunt to th'People his Ridiculous Spoyles;
To come with Lawrel, and with Olives Crown'd,
For having been the Worſt of all the Singers,
Is beyond Patience!

Sce. I, and Anger too;
Had you but ſeen him in his Chariot ride.
That Chariot in which *Auguſtus* late
His Triumphs o're ſo many Nations ſhew'd,
And with him in the ſame a Minſtrell play'd;
The whil'ſt the People running by his ſide,
Haile thou *Olympick* Conquerour did cry,
O haile thou *Pythian*, and ſo fill'd the Sky
With Shame, and Voices, Heaven would not have heard.

Sen. I ſaw't, but turn'd away my Eyes and Ears,
Angry they ſhould be privy to ſuch Objects:
Why do I ſtand relating of the Story,
Which in the doing had enough to grieve me?
Tell on, and end the Tale, you whom it pleaſeth;
Me, my own Sorrow ſtops from further ſpeaking.
Nero, my Love doth make thy Fault, and my Grief greater.

Sce. I do Commend thy Paſſion, *Seneca*;
And yet methinks our Countrie's Miſeries,
Do at our Hands crave ſome-what more than Tears.

Luc. Let Children Weep, and Men ſeek Remedy.

Sce. Stoutly ſpoke, and like a Souldier, *Lucan*.
Yet to ſeek Remedy t'a Princes ill,
Seldom, but it doth the Phyſitian kill.

Luc. And if it do, *Scevinus*, it ſhall take
But a Devoted Soul from *Lucan*;
VVhich to my Country, and the Gods of *Rome*,
Already ſacred is, and given away:
Death is no Stranger to me, I have
The doubtful hazard in Twelve Battels thrown,
My Chance was Life.

Sce. Nothing is hard to them that dare to dy.
This Noble Reſolution in you, Lords,

Heartens me to diſcloſe ſome Thoughts that I ——
The Matter is of Weight and Dangerous.
Luc. I ſee you fear us *Scevinus.*
Sce. No, no, although the thing be full of Fear. ----
Sen. Tell it to Faithful Ears, what e'r it be.
Sce. Faith, let it go, it will but trouble us,
Be hurtful to the Speaker, and the Hearer.
Luc. If our Long Friendſhip, or the Opinion ——
Sce. Why ſhould I fear to tell them?
Why, is he not a Parricide, a Player?
Nay, *Lucan*, is he not thine Enemy?
And You, O Righteous God's,
Whitherſoe'r you now are fled, and will
No more look down upon th'Oppreſſed Earth:
O Severe Anger of the Higheſt God's;
And you Stern Powers, to whom the *Greek*'s aſſigne
Scourges, and Swords to puniſh Proud Men's Wrongs,
If you be more than Names found out to Awe us;
And that we do not vainly build you Altars:
Aid that juſt Arm that's bent to Execute
What you ſhould do.
Luc. Stay, you are carrried too much away, *Scevinus.*
Sce. Why, *Lucan*, what will you ſay for him? has he not
Sought to ſurpreſs your Poem? to bereave
That Honour, Every Tongue in Duty pay'd it?
Nay, has he not ---
Stab'd his own Wife's (a Chaſt Wife's) Breſt, and torn
With *Scythian* Hands his Mother's Bowels up?
The Inhoſpitable *Caucaſus* is milde:
The *Moor*, that in the boyling Deſart ſeeks
With Blood of Strangers to Imbrue his Jawes,
Upbraids the *Roman* now with barbarouſneſs.
Luc. You are too Earneſt,
I neither can, nor will I ſpeak for him:
And though he ſought to wrong my Learned Pains,
I hate him not for that: my Verſe ſhall live,
When *Nero*'s Body ſhall be thrown in *Tiber*;
I hate him that he is *Rome*'s Enemy,

An

An Enemy to Vertue; ſits on high
To ſhame the Seat: And in that hate, my Life
And Blood I'le mingle on the Earth with yours.
Sen. My Deeds *Scevinus* ſhall ſpeak my Conſent.
Sce. 'Tis anſwer'd, as I look'd for, Noble Poet,
Worthy the double Lawrel, *Lucan*.
Good Luck, I ſee, does Vertuous Meanings aid:
And therefore have the Heav'ns for-born their Duty,
To Grace our Swords with Glorious Blood of Tyrants.
[*Exeunt.*

Finis Actus Primi.

ACTUS SECUNDUS. Scene the Firſt.

Enter *Petronius*.

Pet. HEre waites *Poppea* he *Nimphidius* coming,
And hath this Garden, and theſe VValls choſe out,
To bleſs her with more Pleaſures than their own:
Not only *Arras* Hangings, and Silk-Beds
Are guilty of the Faults we blame them for;
Some-what theſe Arbors, and theſe Trees do know,
VVhil'ſt their kind ſhades you to theſe Night-Sports ſhow.
Night-Sports, Faith, they are done in open Day,
And the Sun ſee'th, and envies at their Play.
Hither have I Love-ſick *Antonius* brought:
And thruſt him on Occaſion ſo long ſought:
Shew'd him the Empreſſe in a thicket by,
Her Love's approach waiting with greedy Ey;
And told him, If he ever meant to prove
The Doubtful iſſue of his Hopeleſs Love
This is the place: but ſee they're coming.;
How they agree, here will I ſtand and hearken. [*Abſcondit.*

Enter Poppea, *and* Antonius.

Ant. Seek not to grieve that Heart which is thy own,
In Love's ſweet Fires let Heat of Rage burn out:
Theſe Browes could never yet to wrinkle Learn,
Nor Anger out of ſuch Fair Eyes proceed.

Pop. You may ſollicit your preſumptuous Suits;
You Duty may and Shame too lay aſide,
Diſturb my Privacies, and I, good Sir,
Muſt be afear'd even to be angry at you.

Ant. What Shame is't to be maſt'red by ſuch Beauties?
Who but to ſerve you comes, how wants he Duty?
Or if it be a Shame, the Shame is yours;
The Fault is only in your Eyes, they drew me:
'Cauſe you were Lovely, therefore did I Love.
Oh! if to love you anger you ſo much,
You ſhould not have ſuch Cheeks, nor Lips to touch;
You ſhould not have your Snow nor Curral ſpi'd:
If you but look on us, in vain you chide!
We muſt not ſee your Face, nor hear your Speech:
Now Whil'ſt you love forbid; you Love do teach.

Pet. He do's better, than I thought he would.

Pop. I will not learn my Beauties worth of you;
I know you neither are the Firſt, nor Greateſt,
Whom it hath mov'd: He, whom the World obeyes,
Is fear'd with anger of my Threatning Eyes:
It is for you a far off to adore it,
And not to reach at it with ſawcy Hands:
Fear is the Love that's due to Gods and Princes.

Pet. All this is but to Edge his Appetite.

Ant. O do not ſee thy Face in that Falſe Glaſſe
Of outward Difference: Look into my Heart,
There ſhalt thou ſee thy ſelf ſitting Inthron'd
In greater Majeſty, than all the Pompe
of *Rome*, or *Nero*; 'Tis not the Crouching Awe,
And Ceremony, with which we flatter Princes,
That can to Love's true Duties be compar'd.

Pop. Sir, let me go, or I'le make known your Love
To them that ſhall requite it.

Pet.

Pet. On, on thou haſt the Goale, the Fort is beaten.
Women are won, when they begin to threaten.
Ant. Your Nobleneſs do's warrant me for that;
Nor need you others help to puniſh me:
For by your Frowns I am condemn'd, or freed.
They, that to be reveng'd do bend their mind,
Seek always Recompence in that ſame kind
The wrong was done 'em: Love was my Offence,
In that Revenge; in that ſeek Recompence.
Pop. To anſwer further, will ſtill cauſe Replies,
And thoſe as ill do pleaſe me as your ſelf:
If you'l an Anſwer take, that's brief and true,
I hate my ſelf for being lov'd by you. [*Exit.*
Pet. What gone! but ſhe will come again ſure: No;
It paſſes clean my Cunning, all my Rules;
For Women's Wantonneſs there is no Rule,
To take her in the Height of her Deſires:
A Young and Briſk and Impudent Gallant too,
To miſs the Mark! hard Fates, 'tis very Cruel.
Ant. O Unhappy Man!
What Comfort have I now *Petronius?*
Pet. Counſel your ſelf, I'le Teach no more, but Learn.
Ant. This Comfort yet, he ſhall not ſo eſcape,
Who cauſeth this contempt, *Nimphidius*;
VVhom had I here, ------ well, 'tis for his ſake,
I ſee, ſhe hates me; and ſhall I love one
That hates me, and beſtowes what I deſerve.
Upon my Rival? no, fare-well, *Poppea*,
Fare-well, and fare-well to all Love:
Yet, thus much ſhall it ſtill prevaile in me,
That I will hate *Nimphidius* for thee.
Pet. Fare-well to her, to my *Euanthe* well-come,
VVho, now, will to my burning Kiſſes ſtoop;
Now, with an Eaſie Cruelty deny,
That, which ſhe, rather than the Asker, would
Have forced from her, then begins her ſelf.
Their Loves, that liſt, upon great Ladies ſet;
I ſtill will love the Cheapeſt I can get. [*Exeunt.*

Scene

SCENE the Second, *Nero's* Palace.

Enter Nero, Tigellinus, Epaphroditus, *and* Nimphidius.

Ner. Tigellinus, ſay'd the Villain *Proculus*
I was thrown down in running?
Tig. My Lord, he ſay'd, that you were Crown'd for that
You could not do.
Ner. For that I could not do?
VVhy? *Elis* ſaw me do't, and do't with VVonder
Of all the Judges and the Lookers on;
And yet to ſee a Villain; Could not do't!
VVho did it better? I warrant you he ſay'd,
I from the Chariot fell againſt my will.
Tig. He ſaid my Lord, you were thrown out of it,
All cruſh't and maim'd, and almoſt bruis'd to Death.
Ner. Malicious Rogue, when I fell willingly,
To ſhow of Purpoſe, with what little Hurt
Might a Good Rider bear a forced Fall:
How ſayeſt thou, *Tigellinus?* I am ſure
Thou haſt in Driving as much skill as he?
Tig. My Lord, you greater Cunning ſhew'd in falling,
Than had you ſate.
Ner. I know I did; Bruis'd in my Fall?
Hurt! I proteſt, I felt it not.
Go, *Tigellinus*, fetch me the Villain's Head;
This makes me ſee his Heart in other things.
Fetch me his Head, he ne'r ſhall ſpeak again: [*Exit* Tig.
What do we Princes differ from the Duſt,
And baſeneſs of the Common Multitude,
If we are ſubject to the Scorn
Of each Malicious Tongue? ſay, That I had no skil!
When all that ſaw me gaz'd with Admiration:
The People follow'd with their Eyes and Voice.
And now the Wind do's ſee it ſelf out-run,
And the Clouds wonder to be left behind; Whil'ſt

Whil'ſt the Void Air is fill'd with noyſe,
And *Nero*'s Name ſounds to the Sky:
Jupiter envying, loth to hear my Praiſe:
Then their Green Bows, and Crowns of Olive-VVreath's
The Conquerour's Praiſe, they give me as my due,
And Yet this Rogue ſay's, no, we have no skill.

Enter Neophilus.

Neop. My Lord, the Stage and all the Furniture——
Ner. I have no skill to drive a Chariot:
Had he but rob'd me, broke my Treaſury:
The *Red-Sea*'s mine, mine are the *Indian* Stones,
The World's mine own, then cannot I be rob'd:
But ſpightfully to undermine my Fame,
To take away my Art: He would my Life
As well, no doubt, could he told how.

Enter Tigellinus, *and* Executioner, *with* Proculus's *Head.*

Neop. My Lord,
Tigellinus is come with *Proculus* Head.
Ner. Give him Five Hund'red Seſterces for amends.
Haſt 'brought him, *Tigellinus?*
Tig. Here's his Head, my Lord.
Ner. His Tongue had been enough.
Tig. I did as you commanded me, my Lord.
Ner. Now are you quiet?
This 'tis to be Commander of the World:
Let them extoll weak Pity that do need it.
Let Men cry to have Law and Juſtice done,
And tell their Griefs to Heaven, that hear's them not:
Kings muſt upon their headleſs Peoples Graves
Walk to Security, and Eaſe of Mind.
VVhy, what have we to do with the Airy Names
(That Old Age, and Philoſophers found out)
Of Juſtice and of Equity?

The

The God's Revenge themselves, and so will we.
VVhere Right is scand, Authority is over-thrown:
VVe have a High Prerogative above it.
Slaves may do what is Just, VVe what we please.
The People will repine, and think it ill;
But they must bear, and praise too what we will.

Enter Cornutus.

Neop. My Lord, *Cornutus*, whom you sent for's, come.
Ner. Well-come good *Cornutus*,
Are all things ready for the Stage,
As I gave Order?
Cor. They only stay your Coming.
Ner. *Cornutus*, I must Act to day *Orestes.*
Cor. You have done that already; and too truly. [*Aside.*
Ner. And when our Scene is done, I mean besides,
To Read some Compositions of my own:
Which for the Great Opinion of my self,
And *Rome* in General, of my Judgment has,
Before I publish them I'le shew'em thee.
Cor. My Lord, my Disabilities ----
Ner. I know thy Modesty;
I'le only shew thee now my Workes beginning:
Go see, *Epaphroditus*,
Th' Musick be ready, I will Sing to Day.
Cornutus, I pray thee come near,
And let me hear thy Judgment in my Pains:
I would have thee more familiar, good *Cornutus*:
Nero do's prize Desert, and more esteems
Them, that in Knowledge second him, than Power.
Mark, with what Stile, and State, my VVork begin's.
Cor. Might not my Interruption offend,
What's your Work's name, my Lord? what write you of?
Ner. I mean to write the Deed's of all the *Romans.*
Cor. Of all the *Romans*? a huge Argument!
Ner. I have not yet bethought me of a Title.

You

You Æthereal Power's, which the wide Fortunes doom [*Reads.*
Of Empire Crown'd, Seven-Mountain-ſeated *Rome*,
Full blown Inſpire me with *Machilean* Rage,
That I may bellow out *Romes* Prentiſage.
And when the *Menades* do fill their Drums,
And Crooked Hornes with *Mimalonean* Humms,
And *Ennion* do Ingeminate a round,
Which Reparable Eccho do reſound.
How doſt'thou like our Muſe's pains, *Cornutus*?

Cor. The Verſes have more in'em, than I ſee:
Your Work, my Lord, I fear will be too long.

Ner. Too long?

Tig. Too long?

Cor. I, if you write the Deeds of all the *Roman*'s,
How many Books think you t'include it in?

Ner. I think to write about Four Hund'red Books.

Cor. Four Hund'red! why, my Lord, they'l ne'r be read.

Ner. Ha!

Tig. Why, he whom you eſteem ſo much, *Criſippus*,
Wrote many more.

Cor. But they were profitable to Common Life,
And taught Men Honeſty, and Wiſdom.

Ner. Tigellinus. [*Exit*, Nero, *and his Train.*

Cor. See with what Earneſtneſs he crav'd my Judgment,
And now he freely has it, how it likes him.

Neop. The Prince is angry, and his Fall is near:
I'le begon, leaſt I partake his Ruines. [*Exit* Neoph.

Cor. What ſhould I do at Court? I cannot ly.
Why did'ſt thou call me, *Nero*, from my Book?
Did'ſt thou for Flattery of *Cornutus* look?
No, let thoſe Purple Fellows that ſtand by thee
(That admire Shew, and things that thou can'ſt give,)
Leave to pleaſe Truth, and Vertue, to pleaſe thee.
Nero, there's nothing in thy Power *Cornutus*
Do's wiſh or fear.

Enter Tigellinus.

Tig. 'Tis *Nero*'s Pleaſure, that you ſtraight depart

To *Giara*, and there remain Confin'd:
Thus he, out of his Princely Clemency,
Hath Death, your due, turn'd but to Baniſhment.

Cor. Why *Tigellinus?*

Tig. I have done, upon your Peril go, or ſtay. [*Exit* Tig.

Cor. And why ſhould Dearh, or Baniſhment be due
For ſpeaking Truth, or that which was requir'd, my Thought?
O why do Princes love to be deceiv'd?
And do even force Abuſes on themſelves?
Their Eares are ſo with pleaſing Speech beguil'd,
That Truth they Malice, Flattery Truth account;
And their own Soul, and Underſtanding's loſt.
Alas, weak Prince, how haſt thou puniſh't me,
To Baniſh me from thee? O let me go
And dwell in *Taurus*, dwell in *Ethiope*,
So that I do not dwell at *Rome* with thee.
The further ſtill I go from hence, I know
Thee farther I leave ſhall, and Vice behind.
Where can I go, but I ſhall ſee the Sun?
And Heaven will be as near me ſtill as here.
Can they ſo far a Knowing Soul Exile,
That her own Roof, ſhe ſee not o're her Head? [*Exit.*

SCENE the Third.

Enter Piſo, Scevinus, *and* Lucan.

Piſo. Noble Gentlemen, what Thanks, what Recompence
Shall he give you, that gives to him the World?
One Life to them, that muſt ſo many venture;
And that, the worſt of all, is too Mean Pay:
Yet can I give no more: Take that, beſtow it
Upon your Service.

Luc. O *Piſo*, that vouchſafeſt
To grace our Headleſs Party with thy Name,
Whom having our Conductor, we need not
Fear to go againſt the wel-try'd Vallour

Of

Of *Julius*, or Stayedneſs of *Auguſtus*;
Much leſs the Shame, and Woman-hood of *Nero*.
Sce. We are contented with the Galling Yoke,
If he will only leave us Necks to bear it.
We ſeek no longer Freedom, we ſeek Life;
At leaſt not to be Murder'd: Let us dy
On Enemies Swords. Shall We, whom neither
The *Median* Bow, nor *Macedonian* Spear,
Nor the Fierce *Gaule* nor Painted *Briton* could
Subdue, lay down our Necks to Tyrant's Axe?
Why do we talk of Vertue, that obey
Weakneſs, and Vice?
Piſ. Have Patience, good *Scevinus*.
Luc. Weakneſs and Servile Government we've hitherto
Obey'd: which that we may no longer,
We have our Lives and Fortunes now ſet up,
And have our Cauſe with *Piſo*'s Credit ſtrengthened;
Which makes it doubtfull, whether Love to him,
Or *Nero*'s Hatred hath drawn more to us.
Piſ. I ſee the Good Thoughts you have of me, Lords;
Let's now proceed to th' purpoſe of our Meeting:
I pray you take your Places.
Let's have ſome Paper brought.
Sce. Who's within there?
Mil. My Lord. [*Enter* Milichus.
Sce. Some Ink and Paper. { *Exit* Mili. *and Enters again with Ink and Paper.*
Luc. Who's that, *Scevinus*?
Sce. It is my Freed-Man *Milichus*.
Luc. Is he truſty?
Sce. I for greater Matters, than we are about
Piſ. And thoſe are great Ones.
Luc. I ask not that we mean to need his Truſt:
Gain hath great Soveraignty o're Servile Minds.
Sce. O but my Benefits have bound him to me.
I from a Bond-man have his State not only
Advanc't to Freedom, but to Wealth and Credit.
Piſ. *Melichus*, wait i'th' next Chamber till we call.
The thing Determin'd on our Meeting now

Is of the Means and Place due Circumſtance;
So done it names the Action.
Mel. I wonder,
What makes this New Reſort to haunt our Houſe.
When wonted *Seneca*, *Piſo* to come hither?
Or *Lucan* when ſo oft, as now of late? [*Aſide.*
Piſ. And ſince the Field and open ſhew of Arms
Diſlike you; and that for the General Good
You mean to end all Stirs in end of him:
That, as the Ground, muſt firſt be thought upon.
Mel. Beſides, this coming cannot be for Form,
Or Viſitation; they go aſide —— [*Aſide.*
And have long Conferences by themſelves.
Luc. *Piſo*, his coming to your Houſe at *Baia*,
To Bath, and Banquet, will fit meanes afford
Amid'ſt his Cups to end his Hated Life.
Let him dy Drunk, that ne'r liv'd ſoberly.
Piſ. O be it far, that I ſhould ſtain my Table,
And Gods of Hoſpitality with Blood:
Let not our Cauſe (now Innocent) be ſoyl'd
With ſuch a Blot, nor *Piſo*'s Name made hatefull.
What Place can better fit our Action,
Than his own Houſe, That boundleſs envy'd heap,
Built with the Spoyls and Blood of Citizens?
Luc. But 'twill be hard to do it in his Houſe,
And hard to eſcape, being done.
Piſ. Not ſo,
Rufus, the Captain of his Guard's with us;
And divers others of the *Pretorian* Band
Already's our's: Many, though unacquainted
With our intents, have had Diſgrace and Wrongs,
Which grieve them ſtill: Moſt will be glad of,
And even they that lov'd him beſt, when once chang'd
They ſee him gone, will ſmile o'th' Coming Times,
Let go things paſt, and look to their own Safety.
Beſides the Aſtoniſhment and Fear will be
So great, ſo ſuddain, that 'twill hinder them
from doing any thing.

Mel.

Mel. No Private Buſineſs can concern them All. [*Aſide*
Their Countenances are troubled, and look ſad;
Doubt and Importance in their Face is read.
Luc. Yet ſtill I think it were
Safer t'attempt him Private and alone.
Piſ. But 'twill not carry that Opinion with it;
'Twill ſeem more foul, and come from Private Malice.
Brutus and his Confederates to right the Common
Cauſe
Did chuſe a publick Place.
Sce. Our Deed is honeſt; why ſhould it ſeek Corners?
'Tis for the People done, let them behold it:
Let me have them a Witneſs of my Truth;
'Tis love to the Common-Wealth: the Danger's great;
So is the Glory. Why ſhould our Pale Counſels
Tend whither Fear, rather than Vertue call's 'em?
I do not like theſe cold Conſiderings.
Firſt let our Thought look up to what is honeſt;
Next what is ſafe: If Danger may deter us;
Nothing that's great or good ſhall e'r be done.
And when we firſt gave hands upon this Deed
To th' Commons Safety, we our own gave up.
Let no Man venture on a Prince's Death,
How bad ſoever, with belief to eſcape:
Deſpair muſt be our Hope, Fame our Reward:
To make the general Liking to concur
With others, were even to ſtrike him in his Shame,
Or (as he thinks) his Glory on the Stage;
And ſo too truly make't a Tragedy;
When all the People cannot chuſe but clap
So ſweet a Cloſe: and 'twill not *Cæſar* be,
That ſhall be kill'd, a *Roman* Prince:
'Twill be *Alemaon*, or blind *Oedipus*.
Mel. And if it be of Publick Matters, 'tis not
Like to be talk, or idle Fault-finding,
On which the Coward only ſpends his Wiſdome:
Theſe are all Men of Action, and of Spirit, [*Aſide.*
And dare perform, what they determine on.

Luc

Luc. What think you of *Poppea*, *Tigellinus*,
And the other odious Inſtruments of Court?
Were it not beſt at once to rid them all?
Sce. I, *Cæſars* Ruine, *Anthony* was ſpar'd.
Let's not our Cauſe with Needleſs Blood diſtain;
One only mov'd, the Change will not appear,
When too much Licenſe given to the Sword,
Though againſt ill, will make even good men fear:
Beſides, things ſettled, you at pleaſure may
By Law and Publick Judgment have 'em try'd.
Mel. And if it be but talk of State, 'tis Treaſon;
Like it they cannot, that they cannot do:
If ſeek to mend it, and remove the Prince,
That's higheſt Treaſon: Change his Counſellors,
That's Alteration of the Government,
The Common Cloak that Treaſon's muffled in:
If laying Force aſide, to ſeek by Sute
And fair Petition to have the State Reform'd,
That's Tutoring of the Prince, and takes away
Th'one his Perſon, the other his Soveraignty:
Barely to talk in Private ſhew's Diſlike [*aſide.*
Of what is done; therefore the Action
Miſlikes you, 'cauſe the Doer likes you not.
Men are not fit to live i'th' State they hate.
Piſ. Though we would all have that employment,
Yet ſince your worthy Forwardneſs, *Sceevinus*,
Prevent's us, and ſo nobly begs for Danger:
Be yours the Choſen Hand to do the Deed;
The Fortune of the Empire ſpeed your Sword.
Sce. Vertue, and Heaven ſpeed it. O you Home-born
Of our Country, *Romulus*, and *Veſta*,
That *Thuſcan*, *Tiber*, and *Rome*'s Tower defend,
Forbid not yet at length a happy End
To Former Evils: Let this Hand Revenge
The Injur'd World: Enough we now have ſuffered.
Mel. Tuſh, all this long Conſulting's more [*Exit all but Melichus.*
Than words,
It ends not there; they've ſome Attempt, ſome Plot,

Againſt

Againſt the State. Well, I'le obſerve it farther,
And, if I find it, make my Profit of it. [*Exit.*

Finis Actus Secundi.

ACTUS TERTIUS.

Enter Poppea.

Pop. I Look't *Nimphidius* would have come ere this:
Makes he no greater haſte to our Embraces?
Or does the Eaſineſs abate his Edge?
Or ſeem we not as Fair ſtill as we did?
Or is he ſo with *Nero*'s Playing won,
That he before *Poppea* does preſer it?
Or does he think to have Occaſion ſtill?
To have time to wait on our ſtoln Meetings?
[*Enter* Nimphidius.
But ſee, his Preſence now does end thoſe Doubts.
What is't *Nimphidius* has ſo long detain'd you?

Nim. Faith Madam, Cauſes ſtrong enough;
High Wall's, bard Doors, and Guards of armed Men.

Pop. Were you Impriſon'd then as you were going
To the Theatre?

Nim. Not in my going, Madam,
But, in the Theatre I was Impriſon'd:
For, after he was once upon the Stage,
The Gates were more ſeverely look't unto,
Then at a Town beſieg'd: No Man, no Cauſe
Was Currant; no, nor paſſant; at other Sights
The Strife is only to get in, but here
The Strife was all in getting out again:
Had we not been kept to it ſo, I think,
'Twould not have been ſo tedious; though I know,

'Twas

Twas hard to judg, whether his doing of it
were more abſur'd, than 'twas for time to do it.
But when we once were forc't to be Spectators,
Compel'd to that which ſhould have been a Pleaſure,
We could no longer bear the Weariſomneſs.
No Pain ſo irkſome, as a forc't Delight:
Some fell down Dead, or ſeem'd at leaſt to do ſo,
Under that Colour to be carryed forth.

Pop. If 'twere ſo ſtraitly kept, how got you forth?

Nim. Faith Madam, I came pretending Haſte
In Face and Countenance; told'em I was ſent
For things by th'Prince forgot about the Scene;
Which both my Credit made'em to believe,
And *Nero* newly whiſper'd me before.
Thus did I paſs the Gates; the danger, Madam,
I have not yet eſcap't.

Pop. What Danger mean you?

Nim. The Danger of his Anger, when he knows
How I thus ſhrunk away; for there ſtood Knaves,
That put down in their Tables all that ſtir'd,
And mark't in each their Chearfulneſs, or Sadneſs.

Pop. I warrant, I'le excuſe you: but I Pray,
Let's be a little better for your Sight:
How did our Princely Husband act *Oreſtes*?
Did he not wiſh again his Mother living?
Her Death would add great Life unto his part.
But come I pray, the Story of your Sight.

Nim. O do not drive me to thoſe hateful Pains:
Madam, I was too much in ſeeing vext:
Let it not be redoubled with the telling:
I now am well, and hear, my Ears ſet free:
O be merciful, do not bring me back
Unto my Priſon, at leaſt free your ſelf;
It will not paſs away, but ſtay the time,
Rack out the Hours in length: Oh, give me leave,
As one that wearied with the toil at Sea,
And now on wiſh'd for Shore hath fixt his Foot:
He looks about, pleaſes his Thoughts, and Eyes,

With

With ſight o'th' Green-Cloath'd Ground, and Leavy Trees,
Of Flowers, that beg more than the looking on;
And likes theſe Narrow Shores much better:
So let me lay my wearineſs in theſe Arms;
My Thoughts be compaſt in thoſe Circl'd Eyes;
And bleſs my hands with touch of thoſe round Breſts,
Whiter and ſofter than the Down of Swans.
Let me of thee, and of thy Glorious Beauty,
Tell endleſs Stories; but never wearied be. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Nero, Epaphroditus, *and* Neophilus.

Ner. Come Sirs, I Faith, how did you like my Acting?
What? was't not as you look't for?
Epap. Yes, my Lord, and much beyond.
Ner. Did not I do it to the Life?
Epap. The very doing never was ſo lively,
As now this Counterfeiting.
Ner. And when I came
To th' Point of *Agrippa Clitemneſtra*'s Death,
Did it not move the feeling Auditory?
Epap. They had been Stones, whom that could not have mov'd.
Ner. Did not my Voice hold out well to the end?
And ſerv'd me afterwards afreſh to Sing with?
Neop. We know *Apollo* cannot match your Voice.
Epap. By *Jove*, I think you are the God himſelf
Come from above to ſhew your hidden Arts,
And fill us men with wonder of your ſkill.
Ner. Nay, Faith, ſpeak truly, do not flatter me;
I know you need not: Flattery's but where
Deſert is mean.
Epap. I ſwear by thee, O *Cæſar*,
Than whom no Power of Heaven I honour more,
No Mortal Voice can paſs, or equal thine.
Ner. They tell of *Orpheus*, when he took his Lute,
Hebrus ſtood ſtill, *Pangea* bow'd his Head;
Oſſa then firſt ſhook off his Snow, and came,
To liſten to the movings of his Song:

The Gentle *Popler* took the Oak along,
And call'd the Pine down from his mountain-Seat;
The Virgin Bay, although the Arts ſhe hates
O'th' *Delphick* God, was with his Voice o'r-come:
He his twice-dead *Euridice* bewailes;
His loſt Love's name then Water, Air, and Ground,
Euridice, *Euridice* reſound.
Theſe are bold Tales, of which the *Greeks* have ſtore:
But if he could from Hell once more return,
And would compare his Hand and Voice with mine;
I, though himſelf were Judg, he then ſhould ſee,
How much the Latin ſtains the *Thracian* Lyre.
I oft have walk't by *Tyber*'s flowing Banks,
And heard the Swan ſing her own Epitaph,
When ſhe heard me, ſhe held her peace and dyed.
Let others raiſe from Earthly things their Praiſe.
Heaven has ſtood ſtill to hear my happy Airs,
And ceaſt th' Eternal Muſick of the Spheres
To mark my Voice, and mend their Tunes by mine.

Neop. O Divine Voice!

Epap. Happy are they that hear it.

Enter Tigellinus.

Ner. But here comes *Tigellinus*, come, thy Bill.
Are there ſo many? I ſee we have Enemies, *Tigellinus*.

Epap. Have you put *Cajus* in? I ſaw him frown.

Neop. And in the midſt o'th' Emperor's Action
Gallus Laught out, and, as I think, in Scorn.

Ner. Veſpatian too aſleep! was he ſo drowſie?
Well, he ſhall ſleep the Iron Sleep of Death.
And did *Thraſea* look ſo ſourly on us?

Tig. He never ſmil'd, my Lord, nor would vouchſafe
With one Applauſe to grace your Action.

Ner. Our Action needed not be grac'd by him;
He's our Old Enemy, and ſtill hates us:
'Twill have an end, nay, it ſhall have an end.
Why, I have been too pitiful, too remiſs,

My

My Eaſineſs is laught at and contemn'd;
But I will change it; not as heretofore,
By ſingling out 'em one by one to death.
Each common Man can ſuch Revenges have:
A Prince's Anger muſt lay deſolate
Cities, Kingdoms conſume, root up Mankind.
O could I live to ſee the General end,
Behold the World wrap't in one Funeral Flame;
When as the Sun ſhall lend his Beams to burn
What he before brought forth, and Water ſerve
Not to extinguiſh, but to nurſe the Fire;
Then, like the *Salamander*, bathing me
In the laſt Aſhes of all Mortal things,
Let me give up this Breath: *Priam* was happy,
Happy indeed: he ſaw his *Troy* burnt,
And *Ilion* ly on heaps; whil'ſt thy Streams
(Divine *Scamander*) did run *Phrygian* Blood;
And heard the pleaſant Cries of *Trojan* Mothers.
Could I ſee *Rome* ſo!

Tig. Your Majeſty may eaſily
Without this Trouble to your ſacred Mind

Ner. What may I eaſily do? kill thee, or him?
How may I rid you all? where is the man,
That will all others end, and laſt himſelf?
O that I had thy Thunder in my Hand,
Thou idle Rover, I'le non ſhoot at Trees,
And ſpend in Woods my unregarded Vengeance?
I'le ſhiver them down upon their guilty Roofs,
And fill the Streets with Bloody Funerals,
But 'tis not Heaven can give me what I ſeek,
To you, you hated Kingdoms of the Night,
You Severe Powers, that not like thoſe above,
Will with fair words, or Children's cries be won,
But in Deſtruction, Power, and Terror ſhew,
To you I fly for ſuccour: You, whoſe Dwellings
For Torments are bely'd, muſt give me Eaſe:
Furies, lend me your Fires; no, they are here;
They muſt be other Fires, Material Brands,

That muſt the burning of my Heat allay.
I bring to you no rude unpractis'd Hands,
Already do they reek with Mothers Blood:
Tuſh, that's but Innocent, to what now I mean;
Alas, what evil could theſe Years commit?
The World in this ſhall ſee my ſetled Wit. [*Exeunt.*

Enter Piſo, *and* Seneca.

Sen. Piſo, were you at the Theatre?
Piſ. Seneca, I was, and ſaw your Kingly Pupil
In Minſtrel's Habit ſtand before the Judges,
Bowing thoſe Hands, which the World's Scepter hold,
And with great Awe and Reverence beſeeching
Indifferent Hearing, and an equal Doom:
Mean time, how would he eye his Adverſaries;
How he would ſeek t'have all they did diſgrac't,
Traduce 'em privatly, openly rail at 'em:
And them he could not conquer ſo, he would
Corrupt with Money, to do worſe than he.
This was his Singing Part: His Acting now.
Sen. Nay even end here, for I have heard enough;
Let me not
See him a Player, nor the fearful Voice
Of *Rome's* great Monarch now Command in jeſt,
Our Prince be *Agamemnon* in a Play.
Piſ. Why *Seneca?* 'tis better in a Play
Be *Agamemnon*, than himſelf indeed:
How does it ſtir this Airy part of us,
To hear our Poets tell Imagin'd Fights,
And the ſtrange Blows, that fain'd Courage gives?
When on the Stage I heard *Achilles*
Speak Honour, and the Greatneſs of his Soul;
Methinks we too could on a *Phrygian* Spear
Run boldly, and make Tales for after times:
But when we come to Act it in the Deed,
Death mar's this Bravery, and the ugly Fears
Of th'other World ſit on the Proudeſt Brow.

Enter two Romans.

1 *Rom.* Fire, Fire, help, we burn.
2 *Ro.* Fire, fire, help, fire.
Sen. Fire, where?
Piſ. Where? What Fire?
1 *Ro.* O round about, here, there, on every ſide
Compaſs the City.
Piſ. How came this Fire? by whom?
Sen. Was't Chance, or Purpoſe?
Piſ. Why is't not quench't?
2 *Ro.* Alas there are many there with Weapons;
And whether it be for Prey, or by Command,
They hinder: Nay, they throw on Fire-brands.

Enter Antonius

Ant. The Fire encreaſeth, and will not be ſtaid,
But like a Stream that tumbling from a Hill,
O'r-whelms the Fields, o'r-whelms the hopeful Toil
O'th'Husband-man, and headlong bears the Woods;
The weary Shepheard on a Rock a far,
Amaz'd hears the fearfull Noyſe; ſo here
Danger and Terror ſtrive which ſhall exceed:
ſome cry, and yet are well, ſome are kill'd ſilent,
Some kindly run to help their Neighbour's Houſe,
The whil'ſt their own's a fire: Some ſave their Goods,
And leave their dearer Pledges in the Flame.
Piſ. What, are the Gauls return'd?
Does *Brennus* brandiſh Fire-brands once again?
Sen. What can Heaven now unto our Sufferings add?

Enter 3 Roman.

3 *Ro.* O all goes down, *Rome* falleth from the Roofe.
The Wind's aloft, the Conquering Flame turns all
Into it's ſelf; nor do the Gods eſcape;
Pleiades burns, *Jupiter*, *Saturn* burns.

The

The Altar now is made a Sacrifice:
And *Veſta* mourns to ſee her Virgin Fires
Mingle with Profane Aſhes.

Sen. Heaven, haſt thou ſet this end to *Roman* greatneſs?
Were the World's Spoils for this to *Rome* divided,
To make but our Fires bigger?
You Gods, whoſe Anger made us great, grant yet
Some Change in Miſery; we beg not now,
To have our Conſuls tread on *Aſian* Kings,
Or ſpurn the quiver'd *Suſa* at their Feet:
This we have had before: we beg to live,
At leaſt not thus to dy: Let Cannons come:
Let *Allius* Water turn again to Blood.
To theſe will any Miſeries be light.

Piſ. VVhy with falſe *Auguries* have we bin deceiv'd?
VVhy was our Empire told us ſhould endure
VVith Sun and Moon in time? in Brightneſs paſs 'em?
And that our End ſhould be o'th' VVorld and it?
VVhat, can Celeſtial God-heads ſpeak doubly too?

Sen. O *Rome*, the Envy late,
But now the Pity of the VVorld:
The Men of *Cholcos* at thy Sufferings grieve;
The Shaggy Dweller in the *Scythian* Rocks,
The moſt Condemn'd to Perpetual Snow,
That never wept at Kindreds Funerals,
Suffers with thee, and feels his Heart to ſoften.
O ſhould the *Parthian* hear theſe Miſeries,
He would (his low and native Hate apart)
Sit down with us, and lend an Enemie's tear,
To grace the Funeral Fires of ending *Rome*. [*Exeunt.*

Scene

SCENE *ROME*, a Fire.

Enter Nero *above.*

Ner. I, now my *Troy* looks beauteous in her Flames;
The *Tyrrhene* Seas are bright with *Roman* Fires,
Whilſt the amaz'd Mariner aſar,
Gazing on th' unknown Light, wonders what Star
Heaven hath begot to eaſe the Aged Moon.
When *Pirrhus*, ſtriding o're the *Cinders*, ſtood
On Ground, where *Troy* late was, and with his Eye
Meaſur'd the height of what he had thrown down,
A City great in People, and in Power,
Walls built with th'Hands of Gods, he now forgave
The Ten Years Wars, and thinks his wounds well heal'd,
Bath'd in the Blood of *Priam*'s fifty Sons.
Yet am not I appeas'd, I muſt ſee more
Than Towers, and Columns tumble to the Ground:
'Twas not the High built Walls, and Guiltleſs Stones,
That *Nero* did provoke: Themſelves muſt be the Wood
To feed this Fire, or quench it with their Blood.
Within. } Fire, Fire, Fire.
Within. } Gods, if you be not fled from Heaven, help us.
Ner. I like this Muſick well, they like not mine.
Let Heaven do what it will, this have I done
Already: Do you feel my Furies weight?
Rome is become a Grave of her late Greatneſs:
Her Clouds of Smoak have ta'n away the Day;
Her Flames the Night.
Now unbelieving Eyes, what would you more?

Enter Neophilus.

Neop. O ſave your ſelf (my Lord) your Palace burns.
Ner. My Palace? How? what Traiterous Hand?

Enter,

Enter Tigellinus.

Tig. O fly my Lord, and ſave your ſelf betimes,
The Wind does beat the Fire upon your houſe,
The Eating Flame devoures your Double Gates,
Your Pillars fall, your Golden Roofs do melt,
Your Antick Tables, and *Greek* Imagery
The Fire beſets, and the Smoak you ſee
Does choak my Speech: O fly and ſave your
Life.

Ner. Heaven, thou doſt ſtrive I ſee for Victory. [*Exeunt*

Enter Nimphidius.

Nim. See how Fates work unto their purpos'd end;
And without all Self-Induſtry will raiſe,
Whom they determine to make great and happy.
Nero throws down himſelf; I ſtir him not:
He runs unto Deſtruction, ſtudies ways
To compaſs Danger, and attain the Hate
Of all: Be his own Wiſhes on his Head;
Nor *Rome* with Fire, more than Revenges, burn.
Let me ſtand ſtill, or ly, or ſleep; I riſe.
Poppea ſome new Favour will ſeek our,
My wakings to ſalute; I cannot ſtir,
But Meſſengers of new Preferment meet me.
Now ſhe has made me Captain of the Guard;
So well I bear me in theſe Night-Alarms,
That ſhe imagin'd I was made for Arms:
I now command the Caſtle, he the City.
If any Chance do turn the Prince aſide,
(As many Hat'reds, Miſchiefs threaten him:)
Our's is his Wife; his Seat and Throne is ours:
He's next in right that has the ſtrongeſt Powers. [*Exit.*

Enter Scevinus, *and* Mellichus.

Sce. O *Troy*, and O ye Souls of our Fore-Fathers,
Which in your Countries Fires were offered up,

How

How near your *Nephews* to your Fortunes come?
Yet they were *Grecian* Hands began your Flame;
Not *Pirrhus*, nor *Hannibal*, art Author.
Sad *Rome* is ruin'd by a *Roman* Hand.

Mel. My Maſter has Seal'd up his Teſtament;
Thoſe Bond-Men, which he liketh beſt, ſet free,
Given money, and more liberally than he us'd:
And now, as if a Fare-well to the World
Were meant, a ſumptuous Banquet has he made;
Yet not with Countenance that Feaſters uſe;
But Chears his Friends, the whil'ſt himſelf looks
Sad. *Aſide.*

Scæ. I have from Fortune's Temple ta'n this Sword,
may it be Fortunate, and now at leaſt,
Since it could not prevent, puniſh the Evil:
To *Rome* it had been better done before;
but though leſs helping now, they'l praiſe it more:
Great Soveraign of all Mortal Actions,
Whom only Wretched Men, and Poets blame,
Speed thou the Weapon, which I have from thee;
'Twas not amidſt thy Temple Monuments
In vain repos'd, ſomewhat I know't has done:
O with new Honours let it be laid up.
Strike boldly Arm; ſo many powerful Prayers
Of Dead and Living hover over thee.

Mel. And though ſometimes with talk Impertinent,
And Idle Fancies, he would feign a Mirth;
Yet it is eaſie ſeen, ſome-what is here,
The which he dares not let his Face make ſhew of. *Aſide.*

Scæ. See, *Melichus*, this Weapon's better Edg'd:
Long want of uſe has made it dull and blunt.

Mel. Sharpening of Swords, when muſt we then have blows?
Or means my Maſter *Cato*-like to exempt
Himſelf from Power of Fates, and cloy'd with Life,
Give the Gods back their unregarded Gift?
But he hath neither *Cato*'s Mind, nor Cauſe:
A Man given o're to Pleaſures, and Soft Eaſe;
Which makes me ſtill to doubt how in Affairs, *Aſide*

Of Princes he dares meddle or desire.

Sce. We shall have Blows on both sides, *Melichus*:
What and't be Heart for Heart? Death is the worst.
Provide me store of Cloaths to bind up Wounds:
This World I see has no Felicity;
I'le try the other.

Mel. *Nero*'s Life is sought,
The Sword's prepar'd against another's Breast,
The help for this. It can be no Private Foe;
For then 'twere best to make it known, and call *Aside*
Troupes of Bond, and Freed-Men to his Aid:
Besides his Counsellors, *Seneca*,
And *Lucan*, are no Managers of Quarrels.

Sce. Me-thinks, I see him struggling on the ground,
Hear his unmanly out-Cries, and lost Prayers
Made to the Gods, which turn their Heads away.
Nero, this Day must end the World's Desires,
And Headlong send thee down to Endless Fires. [*Exit.*

Mel. Why do I further idly stand debating?
My Proofs are but too many, and too pregnant,
And Princes Ears still to Suspitions open:
For States are wise, and cut of Ills that may be:
Mean Men must dy, that others may sleep sound.

[*Exeunt*

Finis Actus Tertij.

ACTUS

ACTUS QUARTUS.

Enter Nero, Poppea, Nimphidius, Tigellinus, Neophilus, *and* Epaphroditus.

Nero.

THis Kiss, sweet Love, I'le force from thee, and this;
And of such Spoyls, and Victories be Proudest,
Than if I had the Fierce *Parthian*,
Or Valiant *German*, Ten times over-come.
Let *Julius* go and Fight at the end o'th' World,
And Conquer from the Wild Inhabitants
Their Cold and Poverty; whilst *Nero* here
Makes other Wars, Wars where the Conquer'd
Gains.
Where to o'r-come, is to be Prisoner,
O willingly I give up my Freedome,
And put on my own Chains,
And am in Love with my Captivity:
Such *Venus* is, when on the Sandy Shore
Of *Xanthus*, or on *Ida*'s Pleasant Green,
She leads the Dance.
If *Bacchus* could his Straggling Minion
Grace with a Glorious Wreath of Shining Stars,
Why should not Heaven my *Poppea* Crown?
The *Northern* Team shall move into a round:
New Constellations rise to honour thee:
The Earth shall woe thy Favours, and the Sea
Lay his Rich Shells, and Treasures at thy Feet;
For thee *Hidaspis* shall throw up his Gold:
Panchaia breath the Rich Delightful Smells;
The *Serets*, and the Feather'd Men of *India*,
Shall their Fine Arts and Curious Labours bring:

And where the Sun's not known, *Poppea's* Name
Shall mid'ſt their Feaſts and Barbarous Pomp
Be ſung.
What's he? [*Enter* Melichus.
Nim. One that it ſeems, my Lord, does come in haſte.
Ner. Yet in his Face he ſends his Tale before him.
Bad News thou telleſt.
Mel. 'Tis bad I tell, but good that I can tell it;
Therefore your Majeſty will pardon me,
If I offend your Ears to ſave your Life.
Ner. Why, is my Life indanger'd?
How ends this Circumſtance? thou rack'ſt
My Thoughts.
Mel. My Lord, your Life is conſpir'd againſt.
Ner. By whom?
Mel. I muſt be of the World excus'd in this,
If the great Duty to your Majeſty
Makes me all other leſſer to neglect.
Ner. Thou art a tedious Fellow, ſpeak, by whom?
Mel. By my Maſter.
Ner. who's thy Maſter?
Mel. Scevinus.
Pop. Scevinus? why ſhould he Conſpire?
Unleſs he think that Likeneſs in Conditions
May make him too worthy o'th' Empire thought.
Ner. Who are elſe in it?
Mel. I think, *Natalis*, *Subius*, *Flavius*,
Lucan, *Seneca*, and *Lucius*, *Piſo*,
Aſper, and *Quintilianus.*
Ner. Ha done,
Thou'lt reckon all *Rome* anon, and ſo thou may'ſt;
They're Villains all, I'le not truſt one of 'em.
O that the *Romans* had but all one Neck.
Pop. Piſo's ſly creeping into Mens Affections,
And Popular Arts, have given long Cauſe of
Doubt:
And the other's late obſerv'd Diſcontents,
Riſen from Miſinterpreted Diſgraces,

May make us credit this Relation.
Ner. Where are they? come they not upon us yet?
See the Guard doubled, ſee the Gates ſhut up:
Why, they'l ſurprize us in our Court anon.
Mel. Not ſo, my Lord, they are at *Piſo*'s Houſe,
And think themſelves ſafe, and undeſcry'd.
Ner. Let's thither then,
And take'em in this Falſe Security.
Tig. 'Twere better firſt publiſh'em Traytors.
Nim. That were to make'em ſo;
And force'em all upon their Enemies:
Now without ſtir, or hazard they'l be ta'n,
And boldly Tryal dare, and Law demand:
Beſides this Accuſation may be forg'd
By malice or miſtaking.
Pop. What likes you, do *Nimphidius* out of hand;
Two may diſtract, when either would prevail:
If they ſuſpecting but this Fellow's abſence,
Should try the City, and attempt their Friends,
How dangerous might *Piſo*'s Favour be?
Nim. I to himſelf would make the matter clear,
Which now upon one Servant's Credit ſtands.
The City's Favour keeps within the Bounds
Of Profit, they'l love none to hurt themſelves:
Honour and Friendſhip they hear others name,
Themſelves do neither feel, nor know the ſame.
To put'em yet (though needleſs) in ſome fear,
We'l keep their Streets with Arm'd Companies;
Then if they ſtir, they ſee their Wives and Houſes
Prepar'd a Prey to the Greedy Souldier.
Pop. Let's be quick then, you to *Piſo*'s Houſe,
While I, and *Tigellinus* further ſift
This Fellow's Knowledg. [*Exeunt all but* Nero.
Ner. Look to the Gates and Walls o'th' City, look
The River be well kept; have Watches ſet
In every Paſſage, and in every Way:
But who ſhall watch theſe Watches? what if
They

Begin

Begin to play the Traitors first? O where shall I
Seek Faith, or them that I may wisely trust?
The City favours the Conspirators:
The Senate in disgrace, and fear has liv'd:
The Camp, why, most are Souldiers that he
Nam'd.
Besides, he knowes not all, and like a Fool
I interupted him, else had he nam'd
Those that stood by me. O Security!
Which we so much seek after, yet are still
To court, like a Stranger, and dost rather choose
The Smoaky Reeds, and Sedgy Cottages,
Than the Proud Roofes, and wanton cost of Kings.
O sweet despis'd Joys of Poverty!
A Happiness unknown unto the Gods:
Would I had been a Ragged Magistrate,
Sate as a Judge of Measures, and of Corn,
Than the Adored Monarch of the World.
Mother, thou dy'dst deservedly for this,
That from a Private and Sure State did'st
Raise
My Fortunes to this Slippery Hill of Greatness,
Where I can neither Stand, nor Fall with
Life. [*Exit* Nero.

SCENE the Second *Piso's* House.

Enter Piso, Lucan, *and* Scevinus.

Luc. But since we are discover'd, what remains,
But put our Lives upon our Hands? our Swords
Shall try us Traitors or true *Romans.*
And what should make this Hazard doubt success?
It is not now
Augustus Gravity, nor *Tiberius* Craft,
But *Tigellinus* and *Crisogerus*,
Eunuches, and Women that we go against.

Sce.

Sce. Why ſhould we keep ſo many vow'd Swords
From ſuch a Hated Throat?
Or ſhall we fear
To truſt unto the Gods ſo good a Cauſe?
Luc. By this we may our ſelves Heaven's Favour promiſe;
Becauſe all Nobleneſs, and VVorth on Earth,
We ſee's on our ſide; here's the *Faby*'s Son;
Here the *Corvini* are take's our Parts:
And ſo their Noble Fathers would, if now they
Liv'd.
There's not a Soul that claims Nobility
Either by his, or his Fore-Father's merit,
But is with us: with us the Gallant Youth,
Whom paſſed Dangers, or hot Blood makes bold.
Stay'd Men ſuſpect their Wiſdom, or their Faith,
To whom our Counſels we have not reveal'd;
And while (our Party ſeeking to diſgrace)
They Traitors calls us, each man Treaſon praiſe,
And hate that thing call'd Faith, when *Piſo*
Is a Traitor.
Sce. O *Piſo*,
Think on that day, when in the *Parthian*
Fields
Thou cryedſt to the Flying Legions, turn,
And look't Death in the Face, he was not Grim
But Fair and Lovely: when he came in Arms,
O why there dy'd we not on *Syrian* Swords?
Were we reſerv'd to Priſon's, and to Chains?
Muſt *Piſo*'s Head be fixt upon a Tower?
Thoſe Members torn, rather than *Roman*-like,
VVith VVeapon in our Hands
Fighting in Throngs of Enemies to dy?
Piſ. You ſee the Court and City's Arm'd,
Why ſhould we move deſperate and hopeleſs
Courſes,
And vainly ſpill that Noble Blood, that ſhould
The *Median* Fields,
Not *Tiber* Colour? And the more you ſhew

Your

Your readineſs to loſe your Lives,
The unwillinger I am to adventure 'em:
Yet I am proud you would have dy'd for me:
But live and keep your ſelves to worthier Ends;
No Mother but my own ſhall weep my Death.
Diſgrace my *Roman* Courage cannot bear,
Nor have I the Vanity to think we can
Subdue
With ſo few Swords.
O Friends, I would not dy
When I can live no longer; 'tis my Glory,
That free and willingly I give up this Breath,
Leaving ſuch Courages as your's untry'd.
But, to be long in talk of Dying would
Shew a Relenting, and a Doubtful Mind;
Since Fate would not with Fame our Cauſe reward:
This is from Infamy a *Roman*'s Guard. *Falls on his Sword, and Dyes.*

Luc. O that this Noble Courage had been ſhown
Rather on Enemies Breſts, than on thy own.

Enter Nimphidius *with* Nero's *Guard*; Scevinus *and* Lucan *offer to Fight with the Guard, but they are Surrounded by'em, and taken Priſoners*

Nim. Nay, other end your grievous Crimes await,
Ends which the Law and your Deſerts exact.
Sce. What have we deſerv'd?
Nim. That Puniſhment, that Traitors unto Princes,
And Enemies unto the State they live in, merit.
Sce. If by the State this Government you mean,
I juſtly am an Enemy unto it;
That's but to *Nero*, You, and *Tigellinus*:
That Glorious World, that even beguiles the
Wiſe
Being look't into, includes but Three or Four
Corrupted Men, which were they all remov'd,

'Twould

'Twould pleaſe the State, and eaſe the Groaning
World.

Nim. Away with 'em, be carried before the Emperour.

[*Exeunt.*

The 3d. Scene Changes to *Nero*'s Throne,

Where he appears ſitting, and Poppea, *with*
Tigellinus, Neophilus, Guards, *and*
Flavius *a Priſoner*

Ner. What could cauſe thee
Forgetful of my Benefits, and thy Oath,
To ſeek my Life?

Flav. Nero, I hated thee;
Nor was there any of thy Souldiers
More Faithful, whil'ſt thou Faith deſerv'dſt,
Than I;
Together did I leave to be a Subject,
And thou a Prince: *Caſar* was now become
A Player on the Stage,
A Burner of our Houſes, and of us;
A Paricide of Wife and Mother.

Tig. Villain, doſt 'know Where and of Whom
Thou ſpeakeſt?

Ner. Have you but one Death for him? Let it be
A Feeling one (*Tigellinus*) Be't
Thy Charge, and let me ſee thee witty
In't.

Tig. Come Sirrah,
We'l ſee how ſtoutly you'l ſtretch out your
Neck.

Flav. Would thou durſt ſtrike as boldly. [*Exit* Tigellinus,
Flavius, *and* 2. *or* 3. *of the* Guard.

Enter Epaphroditus, *and a* Boy

Ner. And what's
He there?

Epap. One that in whiſpering was o'r heard to ſay,
What pity 'twas, my Lord, that *Piſo* dy'd?
Ner. And why was't pity, Sirrah, *Piſo* dy'd?
Boy. My Lord, 'twas pity he deſerv'd to dy.
Pop. How much this Youth my *Otho* does reſemble!
Otho, my firſt, my beſt Love, who is now
(Under pretext of Governing) Exil'd
To *Luſitania*, Honourably Baniſh't.
Ner. VVell, if you be ſo Paſſionate,
I'le make you ſpend your Pity on your Prince,
And good Men, not on Traitors.
Boy. The God's forbid my Prince ſhould pity need:
Some-what the ſad Remembrance did me ſtir
Of frail and weak Condition of our Kind:
Some-what his Greatneſs, than whom Yeſterday
The VVorld, but *Cæſar*, could ſhew nothing Higher.
Beſides, ſome Vertues, and ſome VVorth he had,
That might excuſe my Pity to an End
ſo Cruel, and Unripe.
Pop. I know not, but this Youth does ſtrangely move
My mind;
His Face, me-thinks, is more Angelical,
Than Earthly.
Oh! his words invade
My weak'ned Senſes, and o'r-come my Heart.
Ner. Your Pity ſhews your favour, and your will,
VVhich ſide you are enclin'd to, had you Power:
Your Ill Affection then ſhall puniſh'd be.
Take him to Execution, he ſhall dy.
Boy. This Benefit at leaſt
Sad Death ſhall give, to free me from the Power
Of ſuch a Government; and if I dy
For pitying Humane Chance, and *Piſo*'s End,
There will be ſome too, that will pity me.
Pop. O what a Dauntleſs Look! what ſparkling Eyes,
Threatning his Suffering! ſure ſome Noble
Blood
Is hid in Raggs; Fear argues a baſe Spirit:

In him what Courage, and Contempt of Death!
And shall I suffer one I Love to dye?
He shall not dy: Take off your hands; away
Nero, thou shalt not kill this Guiltless Youth.
Ner. He Guiltless?
By Heaven, she is in love with this smooth-fac'd Boy:
Take him away.
Pop. I beg, my Lord, to spare his Life;
Alas, what Treason can such tender Years commit?
Ner. How dare you with your Fate, and God Contend?
But the Bold Impiety shall end. [*Stabs her.*
How impotent wou'd *Nero*'s God-head be,
Cou'd Mortal stand betwixt my Rage and thee?
Neoph. Alas, my Lord, you have kil'd her.
Epap. Help, help, she dyes.
Ner. *Poppea*, *Poppea*, speak, I am not angry,
I did not mean to hurt thee; speak, sweet
Love.
Neoph. She's dead, my Lord.
Ner. Fetch her again, she shall not dy.
I'le open the Iron Gates of Hell,
And break the Imprison'd Shadows of the Deep,
And force from Death this far too worthy Prey.
She is not dead;
The Crimson Red for-sakes not yet her Cheeks:
Her Breath
Yet moves her Lips; those quick and piercing Eyes,
That did in Beauty challenge Heaven,
Yet shine, as they were wont: O no, they do not;
See how they grow Obscure: O see they close,
And cease to take or give light to the World.
What Stars soe'r you are, assur'd to grace
The Firmament (for how the Twinkling Fires
Together throng, and that clear Milky space,
Prepares your Room!) do not with wry aspect
Look on your *Nero*, who in Blood shall mourn
Your Luckless Fate: and many a Breathing Soul
Send after you, to wait upon their Queen.

SCENE the Fourth.

Enter Seneca, *and two* Friends.

Sen. What means your Mourning, this ungrateful Sorrow?
Where are your Precepts of Philosophy?
Where are your Prepar'd Resolutions,
So many Years fore-studied against Dangers?
To whom is *Nero*'s Cruelty unknown?
Or what remain'd after his Mother's Blood,
But his Instructer's Death? Leave, leave these Tears.
Death from me nothing takes, but what's a Burthen,
A Clog to that free Spark of Heavenly Fire:
But that in *Seneca*, the which you lov'd,
Which you admir'd, does, and shall still remain
Secure of Death, untouch't of the Grave.

1 *Frie.* We'l not bely our Tears, we waile not thee;
It is our selves, and our own Loss we grieve:
To thee what loss in such a Change can be?
Vertue is paid her due by Death alone.
To our own Losses do we give these Tears,
That lose thy Love, thy boundless Knowledge
Lose,
Lose the unpattern'd Sample of thy Vertue,
Lose whatsoe'r may Praise, or Sorrow
Move;
In all these Losses yet of this we Glory,
That 'tis thy Happiness that makes us sorry.

2 *Frie.* If there be any Place for Ghosts of Good Men;
If (as we have bin told) Great Mens Souls
Consume not with their Bodies, thou shalt see,
Looking from out the Dwellings of Air,
True Duties to thy Memory perform'd,
Not in the outward Pompe of Funeral,

But in Remembrance of thy Deeds and Words,
The oft Recalling of thy many Vertues;
The Tomb, that ſhall the Eternal
Relicks keep
Of *Seneca*, ſhall be his Hearers Hearts. [*Exeunt* 2. Rom.

Sen. Be not afraid, my Soul, go chearfully
To thy own Heaven, from whence it
Had its Being.
Now lifted up thou raviſh't ſhalt behold
The Truth of things, at which we wonder here,
And Fooliſhly do wrangle on beneath;
And like a God ſhalt walk the Spacious Air,
And ſee what even to Conceit's deny'd.
Great Soul o'th'World, that through the Parts
Diffus'd of this Vaſt-all guid'ſt what thou do'ſt
Informe;
You Bleſſed Minds, that from the Spheres
You move
Look on Mens Actions not with Idle Eyes,
And Gods we go to, Aid me in this Strife,
And Combat of my Fleſh, that ending I
May ſtill ſhew *Seneca*, and my ſelf dy. [*Stabs himſelf.*

Finis Actus Quarti.

ACTUS

ACTUS QUINTUS.

Enter Nero, Nimphidius, Tigellinus, Neophilus, Epaphroditus *and. Attendants.*

Nero.

ENough is wept, *Poppea*, for thy Death,
Enough is Bled; ſo many Tears of others
Wailing their Loſſes have wip'd mine away.
VVho in the Common Funeral of the world
Can mourn one Death?

Tig. Beſides, your Majeſty this Benefit
In their deſerv'd Puniſhment ſhall reap,
From all Attempts hereafter to be freed:
Conſpiracy is now for ever dash'd;
Tumult ſuppreſt, Rebellion out of heart:
In *Piſo's* Death Danger it ſelf did dy.

Nimp. Piſo, that thought to climb by bowing down,
By giving a way to Thrive, and Raiſing others,
To become great himſelf, hath now by Death
Given quiet to your Thoughts, and Fear to theirs,
That ſhall from Treaſon their Advancement plot:
Thoſe Dangerous Heads, that his Ambition lean'd on,
And they by it crept up, and from their meanneſs
Thought in this Stir to riſe aloft, are off.
Now Peace, and Safety wait upon your Throne:
Security hath wall'd your Seat about:
There is no place for Fear left.

Ner. VVhy, I never fear'd'em.

Nim. That was your Fault.
Your Majeſty muſt give us leave to blame
Your Dangerous Courage, and that noble Soul

Too

Too Prodigal of it ſelf.

Ner. A Prince's Mind knows neither Fear nor Hope:
The Beams of Royal Majeſty are ſuch,
As all Eyes are with it amaz'd and weakned,
But it with nothing. I at firſt contemn'd
Their weak Devices, and faint Enterprize.
Why, thought they againſt him to have prevail'd,
Whoſe Child-hood was from *Meſſallina's* Spite,
By Dragons (that the Earth gave up) preſerv'd?
Such Guard my Cradle had, for Fate had then
Pointed me out to be what now I am.
Should all the Legions, and the Provinces,
In one united, againſt me Conſpire,
I could diſperſe 'em with one Angry Eye.
My Brow's an Hoſt of Men. Come, *Tigellinus*,
Let's turn this Bloody Banquet, *Piſo* meant us,
Unto a Merry Feaſt: we'l Drink and challenge
Fortune. Who's that, *Neophilus*?

[*Enter a* Roman.

Neop. A Currier from beyond the *Alps*, my Lord.

Ner. News of ſome *German* Victory belike,
Or *Britton* overthrow.

Neop. The Letters come from *France*.

Nimp. Why ſmiles your Majeſty?

Ner. So I ſmile, I ſhould be afraid, there's one
In Arms, *Neophilus*.

Nim. What Arm'd againſt your Majeſty?

Ner. Our Lieutenant of the Province, *Julius Vindex*.

Tig. Who? that Giddy *French* man?

Nim. His Province is diſarm'd, my Lord, he hath
No *Legion*, not a Souldier under him.

Epap. One that by Blood, and Rapine would repair
His State conſum'd in Vanities, and Luſt.

Enter a Second Roman.

Tig. He would not find out three to follow him.

2 *Ro.* More News, my Lord.

Ner

Ner. Is it of *Vindex*, that thou haſt to ſay?

2 *Ro.* *Vindex* is up, and with him *France* in Arms;
The Noble Men and People throng to th'Cauſe;
Mony and *Armour* Cityes do confer;
The Country does ſend in Proviſion;
Young Men bring Bodies, Old Men lead 'em forth;
Ladies do Coyne their Jewels into Pay;
The Sickle now is fram'd into a Sword;
France nothing does, but War and Fury breath.

Ner. All this Fierce Talk's but *Vindex* does Rebel,
And I will hang him.

Tig. How long came you forth after the Former Meſſenger?

2 *Ro.* Four days, but by the Benefit of Sea,
And Weather, am ariv'd with him.

Neop. How ſtrong was *Vindex* at your coming forth?

2 *Ro.* He was eſteem'd a Hund'red Thouſand Strong.

Tig. Men enough.

Neop. And Souldiers few enough.
Tumultuary Troops, Undiſciplin'd,
Untrain'd in Service, to waſte Good Victuals:
But when they come to look on War's black Wounds,
And but afar off ſee the Face of Death.

Ner. It falls out for my Empty Coffers well,
The Spoyl of ſuch a Large and Goodly Province,
Enrich'd with Trade, and long enjoy'd Peace.

Tig. What Order will your Majeſty have taken,
For Levying Forces to Suppreſs this Stir?

Ner. What Order ſhould we take? We'l Laugh and Drink;
Think'ſt thou it fits my Pleaſures to be diſturb'd,
When any *French*-Man liſt to break his Neck?
They have not heard of *Piſo*'s Fortune yet;
Let that Tale fright'em.

Nim. What Order needs? Your Majeſty ſhall find
This *French* heat quickly of it ſelf grow Cold.

Ner. Come away,
Nothing ſhall come, that this Night's Sport

Shall

Shall ſtay.

Exeunt all but Neophilus, *and* Epaphroditus.

Neop. I wonder what makes him ſo confident,
In this Revolt, now grown unto a War,
And Enſignes in the Field; when in the other,
Being but a Plot of a Conſpiracy,
He ſhew'd himſelf ſo wretchedly diſmai'd!

Epap. Faith, the right Nature of a Coward, to ſet light,
Dangers, that ſeem far off: *Piſo* was here,
Ready to enter at the Preſence Door,
And drag him out of his Abus'd Chair;
And then he Trembled. *Vindex*, is in *France*,
And many Woods, and Seas, and Hill's between.

Neop. 'Twas ſtrange, that *Piſo* was ſo ſoon ſuppreſt.

Epap. Strange! ſtrange indeed, for had he but come up,
And taken the Court in that ſtrange Fright, and
Stirre,
While unreſolv'd, for whom or what to do,
And each had Jealouſy on the other,
He would have hazarded the Royal Seat.

Neop. Nay had it without Hazard: All the Court
Had been for him, and thoſe diſclos'd their Love,
And Favour in the Cauſe; which now to hide,
And colour, the Good Meaning's ready were,
To ſhew their Forwardneſs againſt it moſt.

Epap. But for a Stranger, with a Naked Province,
Without Allies, or Friends i'th' State, to Challenge
A Prince, upheld with Thirty Legions,
Rooted in Four Deſcents of Anceſtors;
And Fourteen Years Continuance of Reign:
Why it is ------

Enter Nero, Nimphidius, *and* Tigellinus.

Ner. Galba, and *Spain*? What, *Spain* and *Galba* too?

Exeunt Nero, Nimphidius.

Epap. I pray thee, *Tigellinus*, What Fury's this?
What ſtrange Event? what Accident, hath thus

O'r-caſt your Countenances?

Tig. Down we were ſate at Table, and began
With Sparkling Bowls to chaſe our Fear away,
And Mirth and Pleaſure look'd out of our Eyes,
VVhen ſtraight a Breathleſs Meſſenger comes in,
And tells how *Vindex*, and the Power of *France*,
Have Choſen *Sergius Galba* Emperour:
VVith what Applauſe the Legions him Receive;
That *Spain*'s revolted, *Portugal* hath joyn'd,
As much ſuſpected is of *Germany*:
But *Nero*, not abiding out the end,
O'r-threw the Tables, daſh'd againſt the Ground,
The Cup which he ſo much, you know, eſteem'd:
Tearing his Hair, and with incens'd Rage
Curſeth falſe me, and Gods, the Lookers on.

Neop. His Rage we ſaw was VVild and Deſperate.

Epap. O you unſearch'd VViſdoms, which do Laugh
At our Security, and Fears, alike!
And plain, to ſhew our VVeakneſs, and your Power,
Make us Contemn the Harms which ſureſt ſtrike:
VVhen you our Glorie's, and our Pride undo,
Our Overthrow, you make Ridiculous too. [*Exeunt all.*

Enter Nimphidius.

Nim. Slow, making Counſels, and the Sliding Year,
Have brought me to the Long fore-ſeen Deſtruction
Of this miſ-led Young Man: His State is ſhaken,
And I will puſh it on. Revolted *France*,
Nor the Conjured Provinces of *Spain*,
Nor his own Guilt, ſhall like to me, oppreſs him:
I to his Eaſie yielding Fears proclaim
New *German* Mutinies, and all the VVorld
Rowzing it ſelf in hate of *Nero*'s Name.
I his Diſtracted Counſels do diſperſe,
VVith Freſh Deſpairs: I animate the Senate,
And the People, to engage them paſt Recall,
In Prejudice of *Nero*: and in brief,

Periſh he muſt; the Fates, and I, reſolve it;
VVhich to effect, I preſently will go
Proclaim a Donative in *Galba*'s Name.

Enter Antonius.

Ant. Yonder, *Nimphidius*, our Commander: now
I with Reſpect muſt ſpeak, and ſmooth my Brow.
Captain, All Hail.
Nim. Antonius, well met;
Your Place of Tribune in this Anarchy.
Ant. This Anarchy, my Lord? is *Nero* dead?
Nim. This Anarchy, this unſtyl'd time,
VVhile *Galba* is unceas'd of the Empire,
VVhich *Nero* has forſook?
Ant. Has *Nero* then Reſign'd the Empire?
Nim. In Effect he has, for he's fled to *Egypt*.
Ant. My Lord, you tell ſtrange News to me.
Nim. But nothing ſtrange to me,
Who every moment knew of his Deſpairs:
The *Curriers* came ſo faſt with Freſh Alarms
Of New Revolts, that he unable quite
To bear his Fears, which he had long Conceal'd,
Is now Revolted from himſelf, and fled.
Ant. Thruſt with Reports and Rumours, from his Seat.
My Lord, you know the Camp depends on you,
As you Determine.
Nim. There it lies *Antonius*;
What ſhould we do? it boot's not to rely
On *Nero*'s ſinking Fortunes; and to ſit
Securely looking on, were to receive
An Emperour from *Spain*; which how diſgraceful
It were to us, who, if we weigh our ſelves,
The moſt Material Acceſſions are
Of all the *Roman* Empire; which Diſgrace
To Cover, we muſt joyn our ſelves betimes,
And thereby ſeem to have Created *Galba*;
Therefore I'le ſtraight Proclaim a *Donative*

Of Thirty Thousand Sisterses a Man.

Ant. I think so great a Gift was never heard of;
Galba, they say, is frugally inclin'd:
Will he avow so great a Gift as this?

Nim. How e'r he like of it, he must avow it,
If by our Promise he be once ingag'd.
And since the Souldiers Care belongs to me,
I will have care of them, and of their Good.
Let 'em thank me, if I, Through this Occasion,
Procure for them so great a *Donative.* [*Exeunt* Nimph.

Ant. So you be thank'd, it Skill's who prevails:
Galba, or *Nero*, Traitor to 'em both.
You give it out that *Nero*'s fled to *Egypt*,
Who with the Frights of your Reports, amaz'd,
By our Device, does lurk for better News.
Whil'st you inevitably do betray him.
Works he all this for *Galba* then? Not so,
I have long seen his Climbing to the Empire,
By Secret Practises of Gracious Women,
And other Instruments of the Late Court,
That was his Love to her that me refus'd;
And now by this he would give the Souldiers Favour.
Now is the time to quit *Poppea*'s Scorn,
And Revenge my self upon my Rival:
I'le straight Reveal
His Treacheries, to *Galba*'s Agents here. [*Exit.*

Enter Tigellinus, *and Guards.*

Tig. You see what Issue things are come too;
Yet may we hope not only Impunity,
But with our Fellows, part o'th' Guilt proclaim'd.

Enter Nero *alone.*

Ner. Whither go you? Stay my Friends.
'Tis *Cæsar* calls; stay my Loving Friends.

Tig. We were his Slaves, his Foot-stool, and must Crouch;

But

But now with ſuch Obſervance to his Feet:
It is his Miſery that he calls us Friends.
Ner. And moves you not the Miſery of a Prince?
O ſtay my Friends! ſtay and hearken to the Voice
Which once you knew.
Tig. Hark to the People's Cries;
Hark to the Streets, that *Galba, Galba*, rings!
Ner. The People may forſake me without Blame;
I did 'em wrong to make you Rich and Great;
I took their Houſes to beſtow on you.
Treaſon in them has name of Liberty.
Your Fault has no Excuſe; you are my Fault,
And the Excuſe of other's Treachery.
Tig. Shall we with ſtaying ſeem to uphold his Tyrannies,
As if we were in Love with them? Come let's away. [*Exeunt*
[Tigellinus, *and Guards*
Ner. O now I ſee the Vizard from my Face,
So lovely and ſo fearful is fall'n off.
That Vizard, Shaddow, nothing (Majeſty)
Which like a Child acquainted with his Fears.
But now Men tremble at, and now contemn.
Nero forſaken is of all the World;
The World of truth: O fall ſome Vengeance
Down,
Equal unto their Falſh-hoods, and my Wrongs.
Might I accept the Chariot of the Sun,
And like another *Phaeton* Conſume
In Flames of all the World: a Pile of Death,
Worthy the State and Greatneſs I have loſt.
Or were I now but Lord of my own Fires,
Where in Falſe *Rome*, yet once again might
Smoak,
And Periſh all unpityed of the Gods:
That all things in their Laſt Deſtruction
Might
Perform a Funeral Honour to their Lord.
O *Jove*, Diſſolve with *Cæſar*, *Cæſar*'s World.

Enter

Enter Neophilus *and* Epaphroditus

Neop. Though other's bound with greater Benefits,
Have left your Altered Fortunes, and do run
Whither new Hopes do call'em; yet come we-----
Ner. O welcom! Come you to Adverſity?
Welcom true Friends; why, there is Faith on Earth;
Of Thouſand Servants, Friends, and Followers,
Yet two are left: Your Countenance, me-thinks,
Gives Comfort, and new Hopes.
Epap. Do not deceive your Thoughts,
My Lord, we bring no Comfort. Would we could.
But the Laſt Duty to perform, and beſt
We ever ſhall, a free Death to perſwade,
To cut off Hopes of Fiercer Cruelty,
And Scorn more Cruel, to a Worthy Soul.
Neop. The Senate has decreed your Puniſhment,
After the Faſhion of our Anceſtors;
Which is, your Neck being locked in a Fork,
You muſt be Whipt, and Scourg'd to Death.
Ner. The Senate thus decreed? They that ſo oft
My Vertues flatter'd have, and Gifts of mine;
My Government prefer'd to Ancient Times,
And challeng *Numa* to compare with me:
Have they ſo Horrible an End ſought out?
No, here I bear ————
That which ſhall prevent ſuch Shame: [*Draws a Dagger*
This hand ſhall yet from that deliver me:
And Faithful be alone unto it's Lord.
Alas, how ſharp, and terrible is Death:
O muſt I dy, muſt now my Senſes cloſe?
For ever dy, and ne'r return again?
Never more ſee the Sun, nor Heaven, nor Earth?
Whither go I? What ſhall I be anon?
What Horrid Journey wand'reſt thou, my Soul,
Under the Earth, in Dark, Damp, Dusky Vaults?
Or ſhall I now to nothing be diſſolv'd?

My

My Fear's become my Hopes; O would I might.
Me-thinks I ſee the Boyling *Phlegeton*,
The Dread and Terrour of the Gods themſelves,
The Furies arm'd with Lincks, with Whips, with Snakes,
And my own Furies, far more mad than they:
My Mother, and thoſe Troops of Slaughter'd Friends;
And now the Judge is brought unto the Throne,
That will not lean unto Authority,
Nor favour the Oppreſſions of the Great. } *Stabs himſelf*

Epap. They are at hand: Hark you may hear the
Noiſe.——— [*A Shout, of Long live* Galba, *Emperour of* Rome.

Ner. O *Rome*, fare-well; Fare-well you Theaters,
Where I ſo oft with Popular Applauſe,
Have won that Glory, which muſt ſhine no more. [*Dies*

Enter Romans, *with* Nimphidius *bound.*

Rom. Thus dy all Tyrants. Let the News be Carried
To my Great Maſter: And the Tyrant's Body
Thrown into *Tyber*; Let th'Aſpiring Traitor,
Nimphidius, ſtraight to *Galba* be convey'd,
To undergo the Vengeance due to Rebels.
Nero, the Nobler Criminal, has the Nobler Deſtiny.
Tyrants by Conqueſt have their Fall Decreed;
But Traitours ſhould by Execution Bleed. [*Exeunt.*

FINIS.

EPILOGUE.

IT is a Trick of late grown much in Vogue,
When all are Kill'd, to raiſe an Epilogue.
This, ſome Pert Rymer wittily contriv'd
— For a Surprize, whil'ſt the Arch Wag believ'd;
'Twould pleaſe You to ſee Pretty Miſs *reviv'd.*
But, Gentlemen, the Caſe is alter'd now,
We may be Dead, --- and Damn'd too for all You:
And therefore, juſt as my Poor Ghoſt came down,
All the Elizian *Shades began to frown;*
Told me, that I muſt there expect no Grace,
Till I return'd to You, and made my Peace.
Faith, it is very hard, you cannot be
Content to vex our frail Mortality:
Damne all Our Plays, call Us Dull Jades, and Fools:
That might content You: --- Would You Damne Our Souls?
I Gad, we'l ne'r endur't, I'le tell You that;
To be thus us'd at this ill natur'd Rate.
Nay, ne'r begin to bite your Lips and Fume;
Not one of Us, but may be found at Home.
If You'l have Satisfaction, when We're there,
We are Ready for You; and come, faith, if You dare.